

THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN RURAL INDIA

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Abstract:

Women's empowerment is a pressing necessity of the hour. Women's empowerment in India enables long-term rural and urban development through improving women's economic, social, and political position. Today is the era of technology. Technology affects the way individuals communicate, learn, and think. During this era, country's survival depends upon the use of this technology. Several examples we have taken from the different developed countries like America, Russia, Japan and Australia who are highly using this technology. Not only we are here talking about recently Covid -19 time, even during the general time, when every country is highly dependent upon the information technology. **"A woman with a awareness of technology are more powerful than a man with a gun."** The information and communication technologies (ICT) have also an effective tool to achieve our development in the country. These tools and technologies can enable the women to fight in developing countries due to change in economic, social and political environment. But we can't forget them, the use of ICT has been several social and economic benefits which are directly linked to these technologies. Information and communication technologies have created new types of environments that favor the women because the technology possible for work from home and allow for better work. This paper is an attempt to study about the women empowerment through ICT application in rural areas and to identify various barriers in context of Technology in rural area.

Keywords: Women empowerment, ICT application, NGO initiatives

INTRODUCTION

Women's empowerment can be defined to promoting women's sense of self-worth, their ability to determine their own choices, and their right to influence social change for

themselves and others. The term women's empowerment is emerged in the 1970's due to necessary for gender equality. During the year 1990, women who were lack of freedom of choice and action to change their lives in the society. For this purpose, research done on concept and definition used regard to women's empowerment, is a process by which women who have experienced to acquire the ability to make better change in the behaviour and personality of women in rural areas. Empowerment is possible when a woman has been used more information technology.

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) have strengthened the women to use the technologies at large scale. The ICT has become a valuable source which eliminates the gender inequality in the society. With the help of ICT, they can access to health, education and other opportunities such as political participation. The ICT is a sharp tool and proving the potential for reducing poverty, improving governance also.

India has a double advantage of women and youth power. At present 55.8 percent of the Indian population is working about age group of 20-59 years nearly, out of this half of them are women. The World Bank Reports that India's GDP growth rate would climb above 9 percent if women have equitable share of jobs and in India its growth by 1.5 percent per year. All change can be possible if Government focused on women and youth population of India.

NGO'S and the self-help groups (SHG) play a very vital role towards women empowerment by providing basic education, vocational training, training for self-employment, legal aid, protection for women and self-awareness programs

The Strategic Review: IT sector and ICT in India

In India, ICT is considered as a good tool for the growth of IT industry. This year Government focuses on the theme “Resilience to Resurgence” and explores how various stakeholders together to face the challenges created by the pandemic and overcome these successfully. As a result, in 2022, they are focusing upon more growth of the IT industry and the year in which the industry crossed \$200 Billion in total revenue and 5 million in total workforce. The ICT market in India is estimated at \$180 billion and is projected to grow to \$350 billion by 2025. The ICT hardware market is estimated at \$20 billion. The ICT sector growth rate is over 9 percent per year and it contributes about 9 percent of India's GDP.

The report examines the good factor for the growth of IT industries.

Table 1. Performance of Subscriber and Tele density

Particular	Wireless	Wire line	Total
Total Subscriber	969.89	26.59	996.49
Urban Subscriber (Million)	555.71	21.47	577.18
Rural Subscriber (Million)	414.18	5.12	419.32
Rural Tele density	143.08	5.53	148.61
Share of Urban Subscribers	57.30 %	80.73%	57.92%
Share of Rural Subscribers	42.70%	19.27%	42.08%
No. of Broadband Subscriber (Million)	83.68	15.52	99.20

(Source: NASSCOM Report)

Literature Review

Sunil Aggarwal (2003), the study found the role of women and building the local capacity to improve the quality of work life. the study also focused on that how the ICT make easy the work of women inside and outside the house. Further he elaborates the knowledge and experience about using the ICT for sustainable development.

Chowdhary (2006), the study entitled "Empowering rural women through science and technology. "The author highlights the principles for developing women-oriented technologies for rural women such as providing employment opportunities, change in the environmental condition, improve the health status and protect the women from hazard.

Laxmi (2010), the study depicted that that women empowerment is the process in which women challenge is facing through adopting the various norms. Participation of women in self-help groups also empowering the women into social and economic point of view.

Chandrasekhar K.S. and Shivaprakash (2010) in their research study found that role of information communication technology is a valuable source of women empowerment. Social and economic barrier can be effectively overcome through this program.

Das Sanjay Kanti (2012), the study depicted that a self-help group plays an important role in developing decision-making ability and leadership qualities. He further explained that women are very interested in education and improving their personal skills.

Talwar Shalini (2012), reported that financial inclusion is a necessary condition for India to become a global economic power. There exists enough empirical evidence to prove that economic growth follows financial inclusion.

Prasad P.N. and V. Sridevi (2014), the study depicted that information technology offers time and space these offers valuable resources for women especially in developing countries who suffer from limited availability of the time, social and lack of assess of knowledge and productive resources.

Padmini Chattu (2017), depicted the role of Mobile Technology in the field of development of women. In this paper, she has been stated that the women are not only focus on communication even they are using the mobile phone into different ways.

Arivanandan (2018), the study analyzed the socio-economic status through the two kinds of information such as cell phone and internet in rural area. Now the women are searching the job through the mobile phones and personnel contacts.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To know the status of women empowerment through application of ICTs in rural area.
2. To Examine the role of Government about women empowerment and the NGO to promoting the IT industries for women's development.
3. To identify the various barrier of usage of ICT facing by women.

Research Methodology:

- ✓ **Research Design:** Descriptive and analytical research design was used for sort out the research problems
- ✓ **Data:** For the purpose of the study Secondary data has been used.
- ✓ **Collection of Data:** The secondary data was collected from various reports and documents of various organizations. Various books, Journals, articles, Newspapers, and websites were consulted and used wherever required for the present study.

Application of ICT in Rural Areas

Up-to the year 2011 cell phone users were around 700 million and subscription is estimated to reach 120 million by the end of 2013. In Gujarat, the mobile phone the

mobile phone is the central to an innovative scheme that allow rural health care workers to provide information related to health and send the text message about the health or for the checkup and vaccination.

In rural areas, most of the women use the cell phone to talk with their families and friends. Apart from that they are using the mobile phone for searching the employment. The use of the cell phone is for agriculture, industry workers working in the MGNREGA programme. The excessive use of cell phones by young unmarried girls talks with their relatives and friends which most men in rural area dominance exists in most in rural families.

Access to Information

In most of the rural areas, some mobile apps has been developed for the women for not only to search the information even they learn the benefits of healthy lives. It is also helpful for women in rural areas for searching job into different ways.

Education and Employment

There are various IT industries has been opened in various villages for young female professional. However, ICT has played an important role in changing the concept of work. Now education at everywhere is possible for the rural women but is only possible through the ICT. Even during the Covid-19 time, not only the men even mostly of the women have performed the job from their own home and at any time, thereby raising their income to become more financially independent and empowered.

Barrier of ICT in Rural Area's

Despite the several benefits of ICT's We can't forget them there are two side of the coin, so several barriers are their due to some limitation about the ICT.

- Lack of computer skills under women in rural areas including hardware and software installation.
- Limited internet facilities are available for rural areas due to some network problem.
- Lack of electricity and poor infrastructure about ICT in many rural areas.
- Various social and cultural barrier in rural areas.

Lack of Government Policy for promoting ICT for rural areas.

Suggestions for improvement of ICT to overcome the issues

There should be need for the further improvement of ICT system for women empowerment. These suggestions are totally based on the finding of ICT about women Empowerment. These are given as under:

1. Government should adopt the right approach about the ICT policy for the empowerment of women in India due to reason being that ICT is a good system for providing the information relating to health, education, employment and awareness.
2. An Educational Institutes can be established for the training of computer for women in rural India.
3. An NGO be setup for empowering the women in rural areas where the govt. imparts the training to women about using the ICT in rural areas.
4. ICT camp be started in rural a to rural areas where the awareness about the ICT is providing to women in rural areas.
5. E-Governance can be adopted by the govt. where women are free to take the decision.
6. A Good Internet facility should be providing to rural women for the development of knowledge of running the ICT system.
7. Govt. can take the initiative to provide the basic knowledge about the computer for rural women because it is very much important for availing the employment opportunities.
8. A program can be started for where the girls of the women can be enrolled and providing the training about the ICT at free of cost.

Conclusion

ICT's is a good source of empowering the women in rural areas but it depends upon the good initiative if the government are taken in this field and they can generate the fund for running the programme for development of women. There are various tools can be providing for development of women in these rural areas such as cell phone, Internet,

laptop etc. which can be providing by the govt. to the women in rural areas. If we make to strong the country then to make the women also strong but is only possible with the help of ICT. Even necessary steps have been taken at the national level. Government to run the program in the fields of education such as to giving the tab to school going children.

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